This form records a faculty member's commitment to advise a senior thesis. A signed contract must be submitted in order to have your thesis reviewed. This form is due to Beth Musser ([emusser@seas.harvard.edu](mailto:emusser@seas.harvard.edu)) no later than 4 p.m. onthe **Friday before Thanksgiving.\*** (If the advisor forwards the form, they need not sign it.)

Student's Name (Please print):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Intended Topic/Tentative Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The signatures below indicate that the faculty member and the student have agreed that the faculty member will serve as the student's senior thesis advisor.

An advisor should be able to commit to advising the student throughout the entire thesis-writing process (beginning from when this contract is signed until the completion and submission of the thesis) and should plan to meet regularly with the student to assess progress and offer guidance during term time. Advisors maintain open lines of communication and set clear expectations for each stage of the thesis process.

In Computer Science, thesis advisors are generally expected to serve as thesis readers. The exception is for some joint concentrations (e.g. Government) where this is not allowed.   
**If the advisor will not act as a thesis reader, please initial here**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The student is expected to respond to emails from their advisor, to come to scheduled meetings on time, to do the agreed-upon research, and to prepare non-final materials by agreed-upon dates or to make arrangements for extensions.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor E-mail for thesis information

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Advisor’s Department

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Student Advisee

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Advisee Name (Please print)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student E-mail for thesis information

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Any change in this commitment must be reported in writing to Beth Musser emusser@seas.harvard.edu.   
\* Students graduating after the fall term should submit this form by the end of the day on the Friday after Spring Break.

**Undergraduate Thesis Advising Questions**

The DUS team suggests that students raise the following questions with potential thesis advisors to set clear expectations at the beginning of the process.

**1. How frequently will you meet, and for how long?**

Students typically meet with their advisors every week or every other week, for between 30 minutes and an hour. Meetings may be more frequent when the student is developing the project and conducting research. These more frequent meetings often involve postdocs or graduate students, in addition to, or even instead of, faculty. However, in all cases, faculty should meet with students directly several times over the course of the term.

**2. What expectations will you set about drafts and deadlines?**

Advisors and students should also discuss whether an advisor is willing to receive rough and unpolished drafts, or whether a student is expected to turn in a draft that has already been proof-read. Some advisors set dates near to the thesis deadline after which they will not read new material.

**3. How accessible will the advisors be to the student?**

Some advisors are comfortable exchanging emails and phone calls between meetings; others are not. A student and advisor should discuss how frequently they expect to be in contact, and how to reach one another in an emergency.

**4. What kind of support will the advisor provide to the student?**

Advisors can provide three kinds of help to thesis students, although it is uncommon for a single advisor to be able to provide all three kinds of support equally well.

* Substantive support: an understanding of the substantive topic of the thesis and advice about books to read, other experts to talk to, contacts in the field, etc.
* Methodological and organizational support: knowledge of the method(s) being used, coding surveys, etc.; knowledge about what a thesis looks like and advice about organizing research, pacing, editing, and writing.
* Personal support: encouragement, advice and support with issues like juggling competing commitments, procrastination, and writer’s block.

**5. How will a student get support that cannot be provided by the advisor?**

Advisors and students should discuss who else at Harvard can provide a student with knowledge of a topic, methodological support, and personal support. Sources may include other faculty members, teaching fellows, house tutors, the Writing Center, and a student’s friends and classmates.